superior quality coking coal have been depleting over the years, reasons for which are as under:

- Upper coal seams of Jharia coalfield having the major reserve of coking coal have been exhausted to a great extent since the mines here are very old.
- The coalfield is having fire over huge area.
- Waterlogged overlying underground workings and caved goaves restrict working in underlying seams.
- Lower coal seams are of poor quality.

In view of low production of good quality coking coal, raw coal feed of such coal to the washeries have also decreased.

(b) To augment coking coal production, Coal India Limited (CIL) have planned to take up three new coking coal projects, 2 in X Plan *viz.* Bermo Opencast (OC) (0.5 Mty) and Topa OC (1.20 Mty) and 1 in XIth Plan namely Kedla OC (2.0Mty) in Central Coal fields Limited (CCL).

Additionally dismantling of Dhandbad-Patherdih Railway line at Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) will unlock about 10 Million tones of metallurgical coking coal which will be extracted during Tenth Plan period.

Private investment in mines and minerals sector

†2398. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have allowed private investment in mines and minerals sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL AND MINES (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) As per the National Minerals Policy (NMP), 1993 the non-fuel and non-atomic mineral sector has been thrown open for private investment including Foreign Direct Investment.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

As far as coal mining is concerned, the Department of Coal has introduced a Bill, namely the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Amendment Bill, 2000 in the Rajya Sabha on 24.4.2004 to amend the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973. This Bill seeks to allow commercial mining of coal any Indian company both in public sector and private sector. At present coal mining in India is allowed to Indian companies under the existing provisions of law. Under the Coal Mines (Notionalisation) Act, 1973 coal mining is exclusively reserved for the public sector. By an amendment to the Act in 1976, two exceptions to this policy were introduced *viz.* (i) captive mining by private companies engaged in production of iron and steel and (ii) sub-lease for coal mining to private parties in isolated small pockets not amenable to economic development and not requiring rail transport, were allowed. The Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 was amended with effect from 9.6.1993 to allow private sector participation in coal Mining for generation of power, etc. as laid down in section 3(1)(iii) of Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 in additon to the existing provision for the production of iron and steel. Mining of Coal for production of cement has also been permitted by the Government *vide* notification dated 15.3.96.

(b) and (c) For non-fuel and non-atomic minerals, the above mentioned National Mineral Policy is equally applicable to all States in the country. In so far as coal is concerned, the State Government are allowed commercial mining of coal through their undertakings which are authorized by their Articles of Association to do mining of coal and lignite. Any Indian company can apply for working of coal reserve in any State for captive mining of coal for power generation, iron and steel production and cement production keeping into account the quality and quantity of coal reserve available in the State.

Losses to ECL, BCCL and CCL

†2399. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether E.C.L., B.C.C.L., AND C.C.L., are suffering lossess continuously for the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.